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RITCHIE'S PICTURE
DEATH OF LINCOLN

Lincoln

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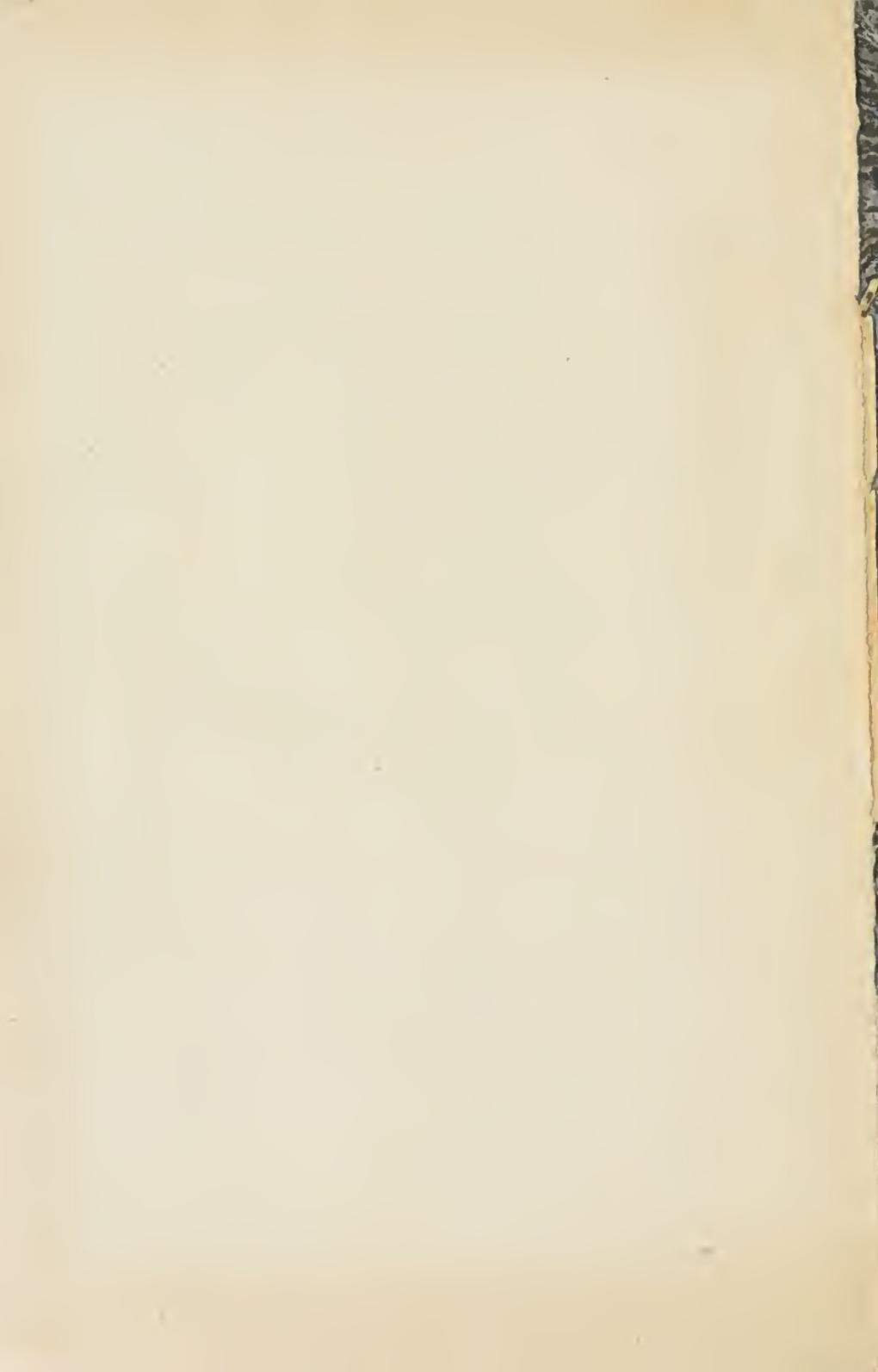


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Ritchie's Picture

Death of Lincoln.









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RITCHIE'S
HISTORICAL PICTURE,
DEATH
O F
PRESIDENT LINCOLN
ENGRAVED FROM THE
PAINTING BY A. H. RITCHIE.

SIZE OF ENGRAVING 32½ BY 21½ INCHES.

ARTISTS' PROOFS,.....\$30 00

PROOF AFTER LETTERS,..... 20 00

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY A. H. RITCHIE & CO.,
39 PARK ROW.

1868.



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GRESS
VOL.

RITCHIE'S

DEATH OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

THE most tragical incident in the history of the United States occurred in the night of April 14th, 1865, when ABRAHAM LINCOLN, the Chief Magistrate of the nation, was taken off by the hand of an assassin in Ford's Theatre, Washington. Sudden as a thunderbolt the calamity fell upon the nation; nor can the dark impress of it ever be effaced from the minds of those whose lot it was to witness the great national demonstration that followed; the cities draped in the emblems of woe; the people standing with bowed heads for a while; and then, with uplifted voices, calling upon Justice to unravel the vile conspiracy, and bring the plotters of it to speedy punishment.

The event has passed into history now, and, like other great historical occurrences, it has formed an inspiring theme for the orator, the poet, and the painter, alike. It is to the latter that we have here to devote our consideration, our purpose being to accompany with a few descriptive notes, Mr. A. H. RITCHIE's Painting of "The Death of President Lincoln."

This event, as our readers will remember, took place in a small room of the house to which the dying President was hastily carried from the theatre. With a view to absolute historical accuracy in facts, the first care of the artist was to visit this room. Every article of furniture, even to the worn out carpet, was sketched by him on the spot, every circumstance of the apartment, and these have all been included with the strictest fidelity in the composition. The last moment of the dying President is at hand; or, indeed, so tranquil is the expression of his pale, care-worn features, that he may already have passed from life into eternity. Bending over the pillow, Assistant Surgeon General Crane, watch in hand, times the ebbing pulsations of the dying man. Close by the bed-side sits Surgeon General Barnes, his strongly-marked profile wearing an expression of breathless and intense watchfulness. Seated on the foot of the bed, is Dr. Stone, concentrated, anxious, and with deep concern impressed upon his thoughtful face. Nearer in the foreground, and to the extreme left of the composition, sits Attorney General Speed. Grouped around the foot of the bed, a little further off, we see the Hon. Mr. Colfax, Mr. Field, Generals Meigs, Auger, the Hon. Mr. McCulloch, Secretary of the Interior, Usher, and Ex-Governor Farwell, of Wisconsin. To the right of the composition, the nearest figure is the patriarchal one of the Hon. Gideon Welles. Standing behind him, is the burly form of Secretary of War, Stanton, characterized by energy and decision; and immediately in front of him sits the President's private Secretary, Mr. John Hay. Robert Lincoln, the eldest son of his murdered father, bows his head in deep grief over the pillow; from behind the head of bed, and just beyond him is seen the Hon. Charles Sumner, and behind him Dr. Leale. Further to the right are seen Postmaster General Dennison, Judge Carter, and General Halleck; and grouped behind these are Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Otto, Rufus Andrews, General Todd, Governor Oglesby, General Farnsworth, and

Pey, Dr. Gurley. These are the personages who were actually gathered around the couch of the dying President, and the artist has placed them as nearly as possible in the respective positions occupied by them on the occasion. Indeed, the fidelity with which he has arranged the scene is testified to in letters written to him by several of the leading actors in it, among which we will particularly mention a highly interesting one from Dr. Stone, to be found among the annexed extracts.

It will be observed that Mr. Ritchie has cleverly evaded the difficulty common to portrait-pieces in which a number of faces have to be arranged with a view to recognition. There is much variety of pose throughout the composition, nor is there to be seen any where in it the unpleasing formality that so often repeats the horizontal line of the frame with a parallel line of heads. The gray light of morning is well expressed by the subdued tone of color that prevails, and in this, too, there is an aid to the solemn feeling and pathos that cannot fail to impress all who look upon the scene. Concentration is a striking point of this picture. Every mind is absorbed by one idea, and we read it on every face. So far as accuracy in the portraiture is concerned, an opinion may be formed by our readers from the annexed letter; and to the fidelity with which some, at least, of the personages figuring in the groups are characterized, the writer of these lines can himself testify.

The subject selected by Mr. Ritchie for his pencil is one of such deep national interest, that much and various criticism will undoubtedly be devoted to the manner in which he has treated it; but the candid critic will undoubtedly admit not only the remarkable power of the picture for the striking character and individuality of the portraits, but also its value as a record of the passing history of the nation.

TESTIMONIALS.

[FROM DR. STONE.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., MAY 4th, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR :

I had the honor to be the family physician, during his residence here, of the murdered President, and no one was more familiarly acquainted with his features and their varied changes, or the noble traits he so often developed—not displayed—to the world. With one of the most difficult subjects which can occupy an artist's pencil—the finale of an awful crime, which shocked the whole nation—few could have treated the subject with more real feeling and pathos, more accuracy and success. When for the first time I saw your splendid picture, I was carried instantly back to that most awful night, spent by the death bed of the noble-hearted, most forgiving President and beloved friend.

Most wonderfully have you represented the face and form of the murdered Chief Magistrate, when, as daylight broke in upon us, his great soul passed away. In art and truth, it is a perfect success; and those who knew what attributes had dwelt in the dead man at once recognized their impress in the now cold features. The great leaders of the nation, who hopelessly surrounded his dying couch, can at once be recognized by the minuteness of their portraiture. Familiar as were the faces of all to me, I can safely say that their portraits are perfect. The

locality and accessories of the painful scene are most accurately represented, and instantly transport the witness to the death bed.

As you so faithfully and historically represent—the awful night had passed—the light of day came stealing in upon the victim and the distinguished men who so long had watched the failing breath. There were statesmen who had accepted the direful fact, with swollen eyes, looking, *not all* upon the dead, but into that dark cloud which this awful crime had brought over and near a suffering nation. Great soldiers, devoted friends, feeling the awful weight of the crime and its certain results, thought of the good man so ruthlessly cut off, just when his great heart was swelling with joy, that his earnest hope, for painful years, had been realized—that this would soon be, *as before, but one nation.*

But this is no theme for a professional pen. I can only testify to the minute faithfulness and feeling of the picture—the pathos of which is unsurpassed—and most sincerely congratulate you on your fidelity to truth, as an historical painter, and your perfect success.

Very truly yours,

ROBT. KING STONE, M. D.

[FROM REV. DR. GURLEY.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., MARCH 12, 1867.

Ritchie's painting of the death bed of President LINCOLN, now on exhibition at the Capitol, seems to me to be a work of surpassing merit. I have looked at it again and again, and each repeated examination has deepened my impression of its accuracy and value.

I stood by that death bed for more than three hours, and saw the illustrious martyr breathe his last, and it is enough for me to say of Ritchie's painting, that, as I gaze upon it, it renews to my eye and heart with surprising vividness, the scenes and impressions of that sadly memorable morning.

Yours truly,

P. D. GURLEY,

Paster of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church.

[FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.]

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, APRIL 4, 1867.

I have examined with great interest Mr. Ritchie's painting of the death bed of LINCOLN.

It is, in my opinion, a very faithful representation of that mournful scene.

The portraits are life-like, the grouping is artistic, and the perspective excellent.

As a work of art, it possesses great merits, and must add largely to the already high reputation of the artist, Mr. Ritchie.

I am, very truly, yours,

HUGH McCULLOCH.

[FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.]

WASHINGTON, APRIL 5, 1867.

I have examined with interest the painting of the Death of President LINCOLN by Ritchie.

It is artistic and strikingly impressive of the scene on that memorable and sad occasion.

The likenesses are generally correct, and the apartment and grouping also.

GIDEON WELLES.

[FROM SURGEON GENERAL BARNES.]

WASHINGTON, MARCH 9, 1867.

I take pleasure in expressing the opinion that your picture of the Death of President LINCOLN presents faithfully that sad event.

The likenesses are correct; some of them remarkably so, and the general peculiarities of each spectator well preserved.

Very Respectfully,

J. K. BARNES,
Surgeon General U. S. A.

[FROM THE U. S. QUARTERMASTER GENERAL.]

WASHINGTON, MARCH 25, 1867.

Your painting of the Death of President LINCOLN truthfully represents this sad event in our history.

The portraits are life-like, the grouping is natural and graceful, and the coloring is agreeable.

You have, I think, been very successful in grappling with the difficulties of the subject.

I hope that the engraving may have a place in thousands of American homes.

I am, very truly and respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

C. MEIGS,

Q. M. Gen'l U. S. A.

[FROM ASSISTANT SURGEON GENERAL CRANE.]

WASHINGTON, MARCH 12, 1867.

It gives one pleasure to congratulate you on the success of your picture of the death-bed scene of President LINCOLN, and the fidelity with which you have transferred to canvass the portraits of those who were present on that most sad occasion.

I am, sir, very truly yours,

C. H. CRANE,
Asst. Surg. Gen'l U. S Army.

[FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY OTTO.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 1, 1867.

I have examined Ritchie's Death of President LINCOLN. The painting represents very faithfully the closing scenes in the life of the late President.

The portraits of many of the persons present are remarkably accurate.

Very Respectfully,

W. T. OTTO.

(FROM EX-GOVERNOR FARWELL.)

WASHINGTON, MARCH 13, 1867.

In your representation of the death-bed of LINCOLN, you have succeeded in reproducing that scene so truthfully and artistically, that all who love and revere the memory of our martyred President, will prize it, not merely for the present, but as a valuable heritage for future generations.

Yours, truly,

L. J. FARWELL.

[FROM REPRESENTATIVE FARNSWORTH.]

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
WASHINGTON, MARCH 18, 1867. }

Your painting of the Death of President LINCOLN, I believe, is justly praised and considered very accurate by all who witnessed that awful y impressive scene.

You have placed upon the canvass most vividly that room with its dying martyr and silent spectators.

The positions are remarkably accurate, and the likenesses excellent.

Very Respectfully,

J. F. FARNSWORTH.

(FROM JUDGE CARTTER.)

WASHINGTON, APRIL 2, 1867.

I have examined your painting of the Death of President LINCOLN.

I am not a critic of the art, and therefore refrain from any other remark than that it pleases my unschooled taste.

As a witness of the scene it describes, I am enabled to pronounce it faithful in its life and death-like truthfulness.

Respectfully, yours, etc.,

D. K. CARTTER,

Chief Justice.



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